A Comparative Study of School-Aged Child Care Programs

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Ministry of Education
Ontario

A RESEARCH STUDY COMMISSIONED BY THE ONTARIO MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study examined school-aged child care in Ontario. Children in this form of child care also go to school, and they range in age from 3 years and 8 months up to and including 12 years of age. The general objectives of the current study were:

- to describe the school-aged programs in Ontario;
- to describe the children and families using these programs and determine the extent to which children and families were satisfied with the programs;
- to describe the qualifications, salary and turnover rates of staff working in school-aged programs;
- to determine what efforts were made to co-ordinate the activities of the program and school most children in the program attended; and
- to measure the quality of care being provided in school-aged programs.

A total of 40 school-aged programs were selected from across the province of Ontario. The sample included programs licensed under the Day Nurseries Act, the act regulating child care in Ontario, and unlicensed programs. The licensed programs fell into three types of auspice. Those operated by municipalities, programs operated by non-profit agencies, and commercial programs. In addition, programs were located either on or off school premises. Ten percent of the sites selected were French language programs. For each program, a target public school was identified. It was the school that most children in the school-aged program attended.

At each site a variety of methods were used to collect data. Questionnaires supplemented by interviews were administered to the child care administrator and a staff member of the program, and to the principal and a teacher of the target school. Efforts were made to interview three children at the program and to obtain data from 12 parents. In addition, the program was observed in operation during a site visit by a trained observer.

Results indicate that school-aged programs have been operating for about 6 years and with an average enrolment of under 40 children; most children were between 6 and 10 years of age and typically attended the program five days per week. On average there was a 50% turnover rate of children in a one-year period.

Staff reported that a wide variety of activities are offered. On any given day there were on average 3.5 activities from which to choose.

The physical environment of the school-aged program was generally rated as good. Two aspects of the environment rated as minimal were the inclusion of soft elements such as rugs and cushions, and the design of space so that children had private areas.

There is considerable variation in the level of staff education. About 20% of the staff had a university degree, 37% of the staff had an Early Childhood Education diploma or its equivalent, 17% had some other type of community college diploma, and 26% had high school education and possibly some post-secondary education. Further analysis of the results

indicate that municipal and non-profit agencies tended to have more highly qualified staff than commercial, and unlicensed child care programs. Staff salaries averaged about $23,000; annual turnover rates were about 50%.

When children were asked about the types of activities they liked, there appear to be differences between younger and older children. Although children of all ages enjoyed quiet activities, older children were more likely to prefer activities in which skills could be acquired and expressed.

Four different aspects of quality of care were successfully identified and measured: staff-child interaction, balance of activities, physical environment, and curriculum. Different factors or variables are related to these dimensions of quality. Most appropriate staff-child interaction was found in municipal or non-profit child care programs, a more appropriate balance of activities was found on school premises, and a more desirable physical environment was found in centres with higher staff qualifications.

Co-ordination between the school-aged program and the school appears to present difficulties. Findings show that children were frequently solely responsible for travelling between the school and program. A number of factors appear to "fragment" the child's day. These factors include: the presence of different children at school and in the school-aged program, the finding that children were typically in 2 or 3 different physical locations per day, and that children were supervised by 3 or 4 different adults per day.

Most programs report that efforts were made to co-ordinate the activities of the school-aged program and school. Results indicate that when school-aged programs are located in schools there was communication on a weekly basis or more often. In contrast, communication occurred less than once a month when programs were located off school premises. Also, more topics were discussed between schools and programs when the school-aged programs are on school premises than off school premises.

Parents reported being generally satisfied with the school-aged program. For example, 97% of all parents reported that their child was happy with the program. However, parents had a preference for programs located on school premises compared to those that were located off school premises.

A number of statistically significant differences were observed between licensed and unlicensed school-aged programs. It was found that significantly more younger children, 3.8-5.9 years of age, attended licensed school-aged programs, while significantly higher numbers of older children, 10-12 years of age, attended unlicensed programs, many of them recreational. It was also found that there is a greater variety and a greater number of activities available to children in licensed programs. Results also showed that the estimated annual family income was significantly higher in licensed than unlicensed programs.

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SCHOOL-AGED CHILD CARE

1.0 BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

Recent changes in family patterns and a rapid growth of the female labour force have increased the need for child care (Ram, 1990). A response to this greater need has been a substantial increase in the number of licensed child care spaces in Ontario. Since 1981 in Ontario enrolment in licensed child care centres has increased by over 60% and enrolment in licensed home-based day care programs has increased by over 100%.

It has become increasingly apparent that a wide variety of children need child care and a broad range of child care services required. In the past, child care has tended to refer to the care of normal children between 2 and 5 years of age during normal working hours. Now it is recognized that children ranging in age from newborns up to 13 years of age require care and, with the trend toward integration of special needs children into child care centres and schools, a variety of exceptional children also need care.

The current project examined an emerging type of child care in Ontario, called school-aged care. Until recently, this form of child care has received little attention either in Ontario, the rest of Canada or in the United States. School-aged child care refers to the care of children ranging in age from 3 years and 8 months up to and including 12 years of age who also attend school. The issue of school-aged child care is beginning to receive attention in Ontario (Ministry of Community and Social Services, 1988) and elsewhere, in part, because of growing recognition that a large number of single parent and two parent families who work need some sort of child care for their children to cover the hours when the child is not at school and the parents are not at home.

Currently a large number of programs under different auspices offer school-aged child care in Ontario. One general category of program is licensed under the Day Nurseries Act (DNA) which is administered by the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Licensed school-aged programs are typically either operated by municipalities, non-profit agencies or by a commercial organization. The first two categories are non-profit forms of child care, while the third category is a for-profit type of child care.

In Ontario, the number of school-aged children in licensed child care programs has grown dramatically over the past few years. It has been estimated (Park, 1991) that as of 1989 about 58% of the children enrolled in centre-based programs also attend school.

A number of unlicensed programs also care for children of school age, usually 6 years of age and older, outside school hours. These programs are usually offered at low cost to parents and are administered by such organizations as the YMCA, YWCA, the Boys and Girls Club, and municipal Parks and Recreation departments. The programs offer a variety of activities for children, and although these activities are often not perceived by the organizations offering them as a form of child care, they do serve that function, at least from the parents' perspective.

School-aged programs differ from other forms of child care in that children split their time between school and the school-aged program. This raises the following general questions: What relation should there be between the school and program? Should consideration be given to co-ordinating the activities of these two programs? What are the advantages and disadvantages of locating the school-aged program on- or off-school premises?

An important general concern in the child care research literature has been to try and measure quality of child care and to determine the effects that quality of child care has on children's development, both when they are in the program and for years afterward. While most child care researchers, professionals and parents would agree that it is important to have high quality care, ongoing research is attempting to develop measures of quality and to determine what effects variations in the quality of child care have on the social, cognitive, and emotional development of the child.

An important limitation of the research examining quality of care for this project is that until now, almost all of the work on quality has focused on child care centres serving 2 - 5 year old children. At this point, there do not appear to exist any well developed reliable and valid instruments that can be used to measure quality of school-aged child care.

1.1 Objectives of the Project

The current project had five general objectives. First, it was designed to obtain general descriptive information about school-aged programs in Ontario and to determine whether there were variations between different types of programs. Specifically, were there variations between programs under different auspices (commercial, non-profit, municipal), did licensed and unlicensed programs differ from each other and did programs located on school premises differ from programs off school premises? Currently, very little is known about how these programs operate, activities they offer, hours of operation, records kept, and so on.

A second objective was to look at the program from the perspective of the children and their parents. Information was collected about the children attending these programs and efforts were made to determine whether different types of children attended the different types of programs. In addition, the project determined how satisfied children were with the activities offered at school-aged programs, staff working there, and so on. As well, efforts were made to determine whether the school-aged program was meeting the needs of the parents.

A third objective of the project was to describe the staff working in school-aged programs in terms of their qualifications, salary, turnover rates and to determine whether there were variations in the staff working in different types of programs.

A fourth objective was to examine the relation between the school-aged program and the school most children in the program attended in order to determine the efforts made to co-ordinate the school-aged program and school.

A final objective was to measure the quality of care being provided in school-aged child care programs and identify factors that predict the quality of care received by children. Described below are the factors that were examined.

- License type. Since one objective of the DNA is to ensure that children receive high quality child care, it may be hypothesized that licensed programs operated in accordance with DNA provide a higher quality of care than unlicensed programs.
- Auspice. The study attempted to determine whether there were differences between the quality of care offered under different auspices, that is, offered by different types of operators? This is a controversial issue in the child care community, (e.g., Lero & Kyle, 1989). Some child care advocates have claimed that licensed commercial programs tend to offer lower quality child care than licensed non-profit or municipal agencies. Whitebook, Howes, & Phillips (1990) recently found results consistent with this claim of child care advocates. Caution needs to be exercised in interpreting this result because it is based on information collected from U.S. child care centres.
- Location of child care program. A third factor that may be correlated with the quality of child care being provided is the location of the child care program. The study investigated whether there were differences in the quality of school-aged child care offered by programs located on-school premises and those programs that were located off-school premises. One might anticipate such a difference because the job of co-ordinating the activities of school and child care may be more simple and better done if the school and child care program are located in the same building.
- Qualifications of Staff. A number of studies have shown that child care programs with more highly qualified staff tend to provide higher quality child care. Most of these studies have been conducted in the U.S., and have focused attention on the quality of child care received by pre-schoolers. This study examined whether the quality of child care school-aged children receive in Ontario varied with the qualifications of the staff.

2.0 METHODS

2.1 Overview

Forty school-aged programs were selected from all parts of Ontario for the study. The sample was selected with a view to representing the variation in school-aged programs across Ontario. The sample included licensed and unlicensed programs, non-profit and for- profit programs, and programs located on and off school premises. Ten percent of the sites were French-language programs. For each school-aged program, a target public school was identified. The target public school was the school that the most children in the school-aged program attended. Data collection took place between September and December 1989.

At each site several methods were used to collect data. Questionnaires supplemented by interviews were administered to the child care administrator and a staff member of the program, and to the principal and a teacher of the target school. In each school-aged program an effort was made to interview three children at the program and to obtain data from 12 parents (the parents of the three children interviewed and nine others). In addition, the program was observed in operation during a site visit by a trained observer familiar with child care programs.

2.2 Selection of Sites

To obtain the sample of licensed programs, an initial list representing almost all licensed child care programs in Ontario was obtained from the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) Direct Operating Grants (DOGS; 1988) database. In order to generate a sample frame, this list was divided into programs whose addresses were listed at a school (on-premises) and those that were not (off-premises). The addresses for the programs were cross-checked against the 1988/1989 Directory of Education and the list was revised as follows: if the address of an on-premises program was different than for the school identified in the DOGS listing, the program was considered off-premises; and if the address for the off-premises program matched that for a school, the program was considered on-premises.

Because no list of unlicensed school-aged programs exists, a variety of sources were used to identify those programs. These sources included: community information centres; Boys and Girls clubs; YM-YWCA's; and municipal Parks and Recreation departments.

Both the licensed and unlicensed program lists were grouped according to the four geographical regions of the Ministry of Education, and samples were drawn such that they were approximately proportional to the number of programs in each region. (The three northern regions of the Ministry were collapsed into one leaving the Northern, Eastern, Western, and Central regions). The only additional restriction on the sampling procedure was that it was ensured that approximately 10% of the programs were French language.

Once the child care programs and target schools had been identified, the school-aged program administrators were contacted to verify that our information was correct and to determine if the program met two additional criteria for inclusion in the study (i.e., that the program operated Monday to Friday and had at least 8 children enrolled), and to obtain their consent to include the program in the project (only two administrators declined to participate). Then, the Regional Director of Education for the area in which the school was located, the Director of Education for the school board, and the principal of the school were contacted by telephone, given a brief description of the project, and were asked whether they would participate in the project. All education representatives contacted agreed to participate in the project.

If consent was not obtained or the program did not meet all of the criteria, another similarly classified program was selected until a sample of 40 suitable programs was obtained. After the study was initiated, additional information led to the re-classification of several programs, which altered slightly the desired ratios for classes of programs that were to be included in the study. Table 2.1 provides a summary of the types of programs included in the sample. A total of 28 licensed programs were included. Of the licensed programs, 17 are located on school premises and 11 are located off school premises.

Table 2.1 Number of Programs Located On- and Off-School Premises by Operator Type

	On Premises	Off Premises	Totals
Licensed	17*	11*	28
-Non Profit	12	3	15
-Municipal	3	3	6
-Commercial	0	4	4
Unlicensed	5	7	12
Totals	22	18	40

*Note that when Licensed programs are broken down by operator type there are three missing observations: 2 on- premises, 1 off- premises.

The licensed programs can be further subdivided by operator type: 15 non-profit programs (12 on-premises and 3 off-premises); 6 municipal programs (3 on-premises and 3 off-premises); and 4 commercial programs (all off-premises). For three licensed programs, the operator type was not specified. The remaining 12 programs are unlicensed: 5 on-school premises and 7 off-school premises.

In terms of other classifications the final sample of programs consisted of 36 English-language and 4 French-language programs. Approximately 30 programs were located in urban locations with the remainder in rural areas as defined by the program administrator.

In summary, efforts were made to select child care programs that represent the variation in school-aged child care in Ontario. To achieve these objectives a disproportionate stratified sampling procedure was used (Kalton, 1983). The sample was not intended to be a representative sample of all school-aged programs in Ontario.

2.3 Procedure

Two weeks prior to a site visit, the administrator of the program was contacted by telephone, an appointment was made for the visit, and this appointment was confirmed with the principal of the school. The target program was then sent a package containing: a letter confirming the date of the visit and the times of the interviews; the administrator and staff questionnaires; a copy of the child interview; and parental consent forms. The target school was sent a package containing: a letter with the date of the visit and the times of the interviews; and the principal and teacher questionnaires. On the day of the visit, the on-site observer performed the following activities: collected the completed questionnaires; conducted interviews with the principal and a teacher at the target school; conducted interviews with the child care administrator, a staff member and three randomly chosen children from the child care program; and observed the program while it was in operation. Typically the on-site observation lasted about 90 minutes.

All interviews were conducted individually and respondents were assured confidentiality. Children were told that they were free to talk about the interview with anyone that they wanted to, but what they told the interviewer would not be discussed with anyone. During the interviews, respondents were encouraged to ask questions or raise concerns that they had about the study, and all issues were addressed and clarified promptly. If school or program personnel were unavailable for an interview, an appointment was made for a telephone interview that was conducted at a later date.

Those parents who consented to participate in the study were interviewed or were sent a package which contained a parent questionnaire and a stamped, self-addressed envelope or were telephoned. If they were sent a questionnaire they also received a cover letter which described the purpose and goals of the study, stated that all information given to Norpark would remain confidential, and requested that the questionnaire be completed and returned within one week of receiving it.

Table 2.3.1 summarizes the results of the data collection activities. As Table 2.3.1 illustrates, the number of instruments specified in the design and the number of instruments actually analyzed were in close agreement.

Table 2.3.1 Number of Administered and Usable Observations for Each Type of Data Collection Instrument

Instruments	Number Planned	Number Analyzed	Return Rate
On-site	40	40	100%
Administrator	40	36	90%
Staff	40	40	100%
Principal	40	39	98%
Teacher	40	40	100%
Child Interview	120	113	97%
Parent	480	217	*65%

* The return rate is calculated on the basis of the number of parents interviewed divided by the number of parents with addresses and/or phone numbers supplied by the programs.

There were four fewer child care administrator questionnaires than planned because at four sites (two licensed and two unlicensed) the questionnaires were never returned. Similarly, one principal did not return a questionnaire. There were seven fewer interviews of children than planned for a variety of reasons. In a few cases not enough parents had signed consent forms permitting their children to be interviewed while in other cases, although enough consent forms had been obtained, the children were not present at the program the day of the interview.

About 65% of the planned number of parents actually completed questionnaires or participated in interviews. There were several reasons for this return rate. First, at some agencies 12 parents did not return consent forms to agencies permitting us to contact them. One agency did not return any consent forms, while in many cases parents could not be contacted in spite of at least two attempts.

3.0 RESULTS

3.1 Characteristics of School-aged Program and Children

In the current sample, school-aged programs had been in operation an average of 6.4 years and had an average enrolment of 36.7 children per program. The age distribution of children in school-aged programs varied by license type. (For further details see Section 5.) Overall, most children were between 6 and 10 years of age with somewhat fewer younger and older children. Parents of 79% of the children reported that their child attended the program five days per week. Most of the other children typically attended three or four days per week. About 90% of the children had parents who spoke English as a first language.

Examination of the school-aged programs indicated that on average there was a 50% turnover rate of children in a one-year period. That is, about half the children entering the program in 1988 had left the program by the end of that year. Although some children undoubtedly left school-aged programs because they were too old, the magnitude of the turnover rate indicates that additional factors (not identifiable from the current study) must also be operating. Regardless of what these factors are, such high turnover rates undoubtedly complicate the task of operating and administering a school-aged program.

3.2 Activities in School-aged Programs

When asked how frequently a variety of activities occurred, staff in the school-aged program reported that art, quiet activities, outside activities, sensory activities and sports occurred almost every day, while drama, dance, and science occurred about once a month. In a given day there were on average 3.5 activities from which children could choose. (For a more complete description of activities in school-aged programs and how they varied with license type, see Section 5.)

3.3 Record Keeping

Most school-aged programs kept the following records on children: health, accident, child abuse, emergency contact, and emergency release forms. The likelihood of keeping records varied depending upon whether the program was licensed or unlicensed (see Section 5).

3.4 Availability of Space

Although the space available to school-aged programs varied considerably, the amount of usable space available to programs, given the number of children in the program, was rated between good and excellent by a trained observer. Some programs shared their space and were unable to use it exclusively. The exclusive space that was available to programs was given a somewhat lower ranking of good, as was the space available for children to hang their clothing and store their personal possessions. In addition, the observer reported that the opportunities the outdoor area provided for diverse play were good.

The furniture available to children was generally evaluated as good. Generally it was appropriate to the age and size of the children. Two aspects of the environment rated as minimal by the observer were the inclusion in the environment of soft elements such as rugs and cushions and couches and the design of space so that children had available private areas in which they could play or work alone or with a friend. This latter shortcoming in school-

aged programs may be particularly important because, as will be described in more detail in Section 3.12, children reported that they liked spending time engaged in quiet activities. This result suggests the importance of designing a physical environment that provides children with private space.

3.5 Ratio of Staff to Children

Overall 83% of the programs had a policy regarding the ratio of staff to children though this was substantially higher for licensed programs (see Section 5 for further details). These policies were generally consistent with the Day Nurseries Act (DNA). The DNA stipulates that the ratio of staff to children is 1 to 15 for children 6 years of age and older. For children 5 - 6 years of age the ratio is 1 to 12 and for children 2.5 - 5 years of age the ratio is 1 to 8.

3.6 Movement of Children between Program and School

An important aspect of school-aged programs is that children need to move between a program and school. Results indicate that teachers and child care administrators had quite different perceptions about who is responsible for moving from the school to the program, although child care administrators and teachers both reported that children were frequently solely responsible for moving from the school to the program. Child care administrators reported that children supervised their own movement in 28% of the programs, while teachers reported self supervision in 46% of the programs.

If one considers the movement of children from the program to the school, similar differences in perception between teachers and child care administrators were evident. Again, both reported that children supervised themselves as they moved from the program to the school, although according to child care administrators, self supervision occurred 22% of the time, while teachers reported it occurred 26% of the time.

3.7 Salaries and Program Costs

An important part of a school-aged program's budget are staff salaries. Although systematic data are not available, informed opinion suggests that in a typical child care program, salaries constitute between 80-90% of the total budget, in spite of the low salaries child care workers receive. Results of a survey of staff confirmed that salaries were low. For those staff working 35 hours per week or more in the school-aged program (N=12), wages averaged $11.71 per hour or about $23,000 per year, and ranged from $8.75 per hour (or $17,500 per year) to $15.71 per hour (or $31,420 per year). These salaries are considerably lower than the salaries of elementary school teachers in Ontario. The median salary for full-time elementary school teachers for 1987-1988 was $47,973 for male teachers and $39,656 for female teachers (Ministry of Education, 1987).

Another issue relating to program costs are the benefits to staff. Results indicate that about 80% of the school-aged programs offered some benefits. Benefits offered include pension plans, dental benefits, OHIP, and maternity leave. (For a discussion of how benefits offered vary with license type see Section 5.0.)

3.8 Evaluation and Planning

About 83% of the administrators reported that their program is evaluated and that evaluations typically occurred between two and three times per year.

Almost all child care administrators (97%) reported that staff evaluations were done on a regular basis, typically once per year although 33% of the child care administrators reported that staff evaluations were done twice per year. In addition, 82% of the staff reported that they met regularly with the child care administrators to set long term goals for the program.

3.9 Co-ordination Between Program and School

A defining characteristic of school-aged child care is that children divide their time between a school and a child care program. In this section an effort is made to describe ways in which the child's day is "fragmented" (LaPierre, 1980), by being exposed to different children, staff, ways of doing things, environments, and so on. In addition, efforts to reduce fragmentation by co-ordinating the activities of the school and school-aged programs are described.

A somewhat unexpected finding was that children in a given school-aged program were typically drawn from between two to four different schools, making it more difficult to co-ordinate the activities of schools and school-aged programs. In addition, it must also add to the fragmented nature of children's days since patterns of social interaction among children are undoubtedly affected by the presence of different peers at school and at the school-aged program.

To document other aspects that may add to the fragmented nature of a child's day, parents were asked to indicate how many different locations a child experiences and how many different adults supervise a child in a regular school day. Results indicate that children experienced on average 2.3 locations per day, 28% of the children experienced three or more locations. In addition, children were typically supervised by an average of 3.4 different adults every day.

One indicator of co-ordination is the frequency of communication between program and school. Principals, teachers, child care administrators and staff were all asked to rate the frequency with which communication occurred. Principals, child care administrators and staff reported that communication occurred between once per week and once per month, while

teachers reported that communication occurred somewhat less often than once per month, though the frequency of communication depends upon whether the program was located on- or off-school premises. (For a more detailed description see Section 5).

Both child care administrators and teachers reported that they were somewhat satisfied with the communication between the program and school and were somewhat satisfied with the co-ordination of the program with the school.

3.10 Child Care Policies Within Boards of Education

Principals were asked to indicate whether they were aware of a Board policy describing school-aged child care co-ordination guidelines. Of the 40 principals responding, 27 or 68% of the principals reported that they either did not know of a policy or that a policy did not exist, indicating that even if such policies were in place, they were having little impact because of a lack of awareness.

3.11 Staff Training and Patterns of Work

A number of studies have found that the type and extent of staff training can affect the quality of care provided by a child care program (e.g., Howes, 1983; Ruopp, Travers, Glantz & Coelen, 1979, Whitebook, Howes & Phillips, 1990), although the effect of training on quality of care provided by school-aged programs has not yet been established, as far as we know.

The level of staff education for school-aged programs was determined by establishing for each person on staff, their level of training. Results indicate a great deal of variation in the level of staff education. About 20% of the staff had a university degree, 37% of the staff had an Early Childhood Education (E.C.E) diploma or its equivalent, 17.4% had some other form of community college diploma and 25.6% had a high school or high school and some post-secondary education. (The patterns of staff training differed by license type and by operator type. For details, see Section 5.0).

Staff were asked to indicate how many professional development activities they attended in the past year. Results indicate that on average they attended fewer than 0.65 (range 0 - 1.0) of the following professional development activities (workshop, seminar, visit to other children's programs, in-service training course, college level course, university course). One of the difficulties associated with having staff of school-aged child care programs attend these courses is the small number of relevant courses currently available. Almost all child care administrators (94.5%) reported that they provided some form of assistance to enable their staff to attend professional development activities. The type of assistance varied. The majority of administrators (67%) indicated that they would cover the cost, and about 61% indicated that they would provide paid time off.

Staff Turnover

The annual turnover rate of staff in the school-aged programs sampled was about 50%. In other words, in a typical school-aged program about half the staff working for a program at the beginning of the year will have left the program by the end of the year. This turnover rate is extremely high compared to the turnover rate of teachers in the Ontario public school system, which is about 9% (Ministry of Education, 1987), but it is similar to results reported by others who have examined turnover of child care staff in Ontario (Norpark, 1989) and in the United States (Whitebook, Howes, & Phillips, 1990). Consistent with this finding, results indicate that most staff recently joined the program and on average had been with the program only 1.8 years.

3.12 Children's Program and Activity Preferences

Children were asked about aspects of their school-aged program that they like and dislike. Results, presented in Table 3.12.1, indicate that children had definite views about what aspects of their school-aged program they liked or disliked. Interestingly, it is the same program aspects that arouse strong positive and negative feelings. For instance, 49% of the children claimed that activities were the reason for their liking of the program and 34% of the children, who disliked the program, claimed it was because of its activities. This fact is important because of the finding that children appear to have more daily activity choices in licensed than unlicensed off-school premises programs. Aspects of school-aged programs that children had the strongest feelings about were activities, equipment, and other children in the program.

Table 3.12.1 Reasons Why Children Like or Dislike Their School-Aged Program

	Like Percentage (N=102)	Dislike Percentage (N=32)
Activities	49.0	34.4
Equipment	19.6	25.0
Children	17.6	28.1
Teachers	7.8	9.4
Food	4.9	0.0
Transit	1.0	3.1

Table 3.12.2 examines activities in further detail, to determine what types of activities are most preferred. Children were asked what things they like to do when they come to the program. The first five responses by children were recorded, coded into categories shown in Table 3.12.2, and are presented as a function of the age of the child.

Table 3.12.2 Children's Activity Preferences

	AGE OF CHILD		
ACTIVITY	3.8-5.9	6.0-9.9	10.0-12.0
	n=33	n=213	n=21
Quiet Activities	48.5	31.0	28.6
Creative Arts	9.1	23.5	28.6
Sports	3.0	9.0	28.6
Outside	12.1	9.4	9.5
Food	6.1	7.0	4.8
Sensory and Building Activities	9.1	3.3	0.0
Creative Drama	6.1	5.6	0.0
Friends	3.0	6.6	0.0
Science	3.0	2.3	0.0
Homework	0.0	1.4	0.0
Creative Music and Dance	0.0	1.0	0.0

The five most preferred areas were quiet activities (36.0%), arts (20.4%), sports (13.5%), outside (10.3%), and food (6.0%). Interestingly, there appear to be differences between younger and older children in terms of their preferences. Although caution needs to be exercised in the interpretation of these results, it would appear that, younger children, in particular, enjoyed quiet activities, although children of all ages indicated that they enjoyed quiet activities as well. Older children appear to prefer activities in which skills can be acquired and expressed, and for this reason were more likely to identify creative arts and sports as activities their preferred activities. In our view, it would be worthwhile to investigate children's activity preferences in more depth because it would help people who plan programming for school-aged programs and it would suggest the kinds of skills needed by people working in school-aged programs.

When asked a series of questions about how they felt about school-aged programs and the adults employed by them, almost all children responded positively. Thus, 83% of the children reported that the adults in school-aged programs were helpful, 91% believe adults were nice, and 77% of the children believed that the rules were fair.

3.13 Parent Involvement in the School-aged Program

Results from the parent questionnaire generally indicate that although parents were relatively well informed about aspects of the school-aged program directly affecting them and their child, they were less well informed about the opportunities for participating in administrative and other aspects of the program's functioning. Thus, parents generally reported that they were well informed or very well informed about payment information, hours of operation, holidays, and transportation arrangements. However, parents reported that they were only minimally informed or well informed about opportunities for parent involvement.

This lack of involvement by parents is more strikingly illustrated by the results from a question which asked parents to indicate whether the school-aged program their child attended permitted them to engage in a variety of activities. Results indicate that over 60% of the parents did not know whether they could serve on a board or an advisory committee, over 40% of the parents did not know whether they were permitted to participate in an evaluation of the program or help with program planning, and over 30% of the parents did not know whether they could help with program activities or could help on field trips.

Program Availability and Need

Bearing in mind the finding that most children attend child care five days per week, it was of interest whether parents needed programs to be available beyond the typical five-day week when schools were open and, in fact, whether programs were available during the five-day work week when schools might be closed. Table 3.13.1 matches parents' reported need for program availability, other than for school days, and actual availability of programs as reported by child care administrators. Parents were asked on which occasions, other than on school days, the program should be available. Administrators were asked when their program was open outside the typical school week. According to Table 3.13.1, there is a close match between need and availability, suggesting that school-aged programs generally have been responding to the needs of parents, at least those who already use the program. Almost no parents expressed a need for programs to be available on the weekend and, in fact, they were not available. The majority of parents expressed a need for program availability at all other times, that would typically fall in the five-day school/work week and the majority of programs were available at these times. It is probable that parents who need child care at times when it is not offered at the program have made other arrangements and for this reason are not represented in the sample.

Table 3.13.1

Parent Need for Program and Actual Availability

Time	Need (Parent) Percentage n = 217	Program Availability (Administrator) Percentage n = 32
Weekend	5	6
Professional Day Development	77	88
Holiday	60	63
Summer	64	63

Note. The total number of respondents is indicated at the top of each column; more than one choice is possible.

Parents appear to be satisfied with the school-aged program their child attends. Almost all parents (97%) reported that their child was happy with the school-aged program, and 93% reported that they were satisfied with the location of the program, although their satisfaction does vary depending upon whether the program is on or off school premises.

4.0 QUALITY OF CHILD CARE

An important element in the current study is an attempt to measure the quality of care children receive in a school-aged program. This focus on quality of child care is justified because a number of previous studies have found that the quality of care children receive in a child care centre influences their current and future development (e.g., Howes, 1988; Howes & Olenick, 1986; Phillips, McCartney, & Scarr, 1987; Ruopp, Travers, Glantz & Coelen, 1979).

Although these studies provide consistent confirmation of the importance of high quality child care, they have two significant limitations. First, no study we are aware of has attempted to systematically empirically assess the quality of care children receive in Canada. With a few exceptions, most studies examining this issue have been conducted in the United States.

A second limitation of the studies is that they have focused their attention on the quality child care received by pre-schoolers and not school-aged children, the focus of the current study. This latter limitation is quite serious because it became necessary to develop a new data collection instrument that could be used to measure quality of child care received by children of this age.

In developing this instrument we were guided by two general principles. First, a critical attribute of child care is that it is age appropriate. Interactions between staff and children should be appropriate to the age of the child, the activities and curriculum need to take the age of the children into consideration, and the physical environment should be appropriate to the age of the children. The second general principle is that quality of care can productively be thought of as a multifaceted concept consisting of several dimensions (e.g., National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1984; Report of the task force on child care, 1986).

After reviewing efforts of other researchers who have developed measures of quality, we decided to take as our starting point a questionnaire developed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. There were two main reasons for using this questionnaire as a starting point. First, the criteria presented in this questionnaire represent the consensus of the early childhood education profession regarding the definition of good child care. The criteria have been reviewed by 175 early childhood education specialists and have been field tested in 32 early childhood programs. Second, the criteria are more extensive than others reviewed and, in addition, they were designed to be used in programs with children ranging in age from birth to 8 years old.

However, the criteria did require considerable reworking in order to make them suitable for the current study. Efforts were made to ensure that the information sought reflected the needs of the children in our study who were 4-12 years of age. In addition, effort was made to increase inter-observer reliability by constructing questions which different observers would answer similarly.

The data collection instrument was designed to be used by a trained professional in early childhood education with considerable child care experience in group care settings. To complete the instrument this individual would need to spend between one and two hours observing a child care setting and recording on this instrument the information requested.

The observation instrument contained about sixty items, which were divided into five subsets of items measuring different dimensions of the quality of a child care program. The subsets were: interactions among staff and children; balance of activities; program curriculum; physical environment; and health and safety. Each subset of items was scored separately for the three age groups (3.8-5.9 years, 6.0-9.9 years, and 10-12 years) which could be in the program at the time of the program.

The instrument consisted of items on which scores were assigned indicating that the event was not observed (value 1), inadequate (value 2), minimal (value 3), good (value 4), excellent (value 5), or the observation was not applicable to the program (value 6). In addition, one subset of items measuring the balance of activities, used a 7-point scale. For that scale, the observer evaluated whether there was a balance of activities. For example, the observer had to decide if there was a balance between individual and group activities using a 7-point scale.

On that scale a score of "4" indicated a balance between individual and group activities, the scores "3", "2" and "1" represented situations where there was an increasing imbalance of individual activities, while the scores "5", "6", and "7" represented an increasing imbalance of group activities.

Appendix "A" contains a list of the items comprising each of the five subscales.

4.1 Scale Construction and Reliability Tests

The basic strategy in generating the scales was to obtain an overall measure for each subscale at each site by summing the scores of all the items in that subscale and dividing by the number of items in that scale.

However, for statistical reasons (to equate the contribution of each item and to easily handle missing data) the following fairly standard data analysis procedures were used. First, all scores were converted to Z scores and missing values were assigned the mean value "0". Using the Z-scores, a Cronbach alpha was calculated for each subset of items to assess the reliability of the subscale. Items within a subset which were not related to the other items were dropped from the subset. The items, which were dropped are indicated by an "*" in Appendix A. The remaining items were then summed and divided by the number of items remaining in the subscale to obtain an overall measure of the subscale.

The final subscales consisted of: a 12-item scale assessing interactions among staff and children (Cronbach alpha=0.87); a 5-item scale assessing the balance of activities in the program (Cronbach alpha=0.77); a 20-item scale assessing the curriculum (Cronbach alpha=0.75); an 8-item physical environment scale (Cronbach alpha=0.77) and; a 6-item health and safety scale (Cronbach alpha=0.62).

A review of these Cronbach alpha scores suggests that reliable measures (alpha coefficient greater than 0.75) have been created for each subscale above except for health and safety which had a Cronbach alpha of 0.62 and fell well below the 0.75 criterion for reliability. Because health and safety is not a reliable scale, this indicator of quality has been dropped from all subsequent analyses.

4.2 Correlations Among Components of Quality

Before proceeding to determine whether certain types of factors such as the type of program model are predictive of quality, the relation between the different components of quality will be described through an analysis of the correlation coefficients between the measures. (A correlation coefficient is a statistical measure of association between two variables. Correlation coefficients measure the degree to which two variables covary with each other. Correlation coefficients range continuously from a maximum positive value of +1, which

represents a perfect positive association between two variables, to a value of 0, which represents no association, to -1 which represents a perfect negative association.) A positive association between two measures or variables means that higher scores on one variable are associated with higher scores on the other variable. A negative association between two variables means that a higher score on one variable is associated with lower scores on the other variable. Table 4.2.1 shows the correlations among the components of quality for each of the three age groups of children. As shown in Table 4.2.1 the number of cases reported depends upon the age of the child varying from 27 cases for the youngest children to 40 cases for middle group to 16 cases for the oldest group. This variation in the number of cases occurred because a number of programs did not have children of all ages present in the program the day that the program was observed. The first point to note from the table is that the correlation coefficients between the different components of quality are positive or not significantly different from 0. (The three negative correlation coefficients do not differ significantly from 0 at the .05 level.) This result means that the school-aged programs in our sample scoring high on one dimension of quality such as staff-child interaction tended to score high on other dimensions (e.g., curriculum) while programs scoring low on one dimension of quality tended to score low on other dimensions as well.

A second point to note is that the different components of quality, while positively correlated to each other, do seem to be measuring different aspects of quality because the correlations are not really highly correlated with each other. If the different measures of quality were in fact measuring the same dimension, then one would expect that the variables would be perfectly positively associated and would have a value close to or equal to +1. More experience with these measures is needed before determining whether the four dimensions of quality used here represent independent dimensions of quality.

Table 4.2.1 Correlation Coefficients Between Components of Quality

Children Aged 3.8 - 5.9 Years (N=27)

	Interaction	Balance	Curriculum	Environment
Interaction	1.00	.29	.31	-.21
Balance		1.00	.23	-.13
Curriculum			1.00	.36
Physical Environment				1.00

Children Aged 6 - 9.9 Years (N=40)

	Interaction	Balance	Curriculum	Environment
Interaction	1.00	.29	.48 **	.04
Balance		1.00	.19	.03
Curriculum			1.00	.54 **
Physical Environment				1.00

Children Aged 10 - 12 Years (N=16)

	Interaction	Balance	Curriculum	Environment
Interaction	1.00	.43	.47	.16
Balance		1.00	.05	-.12
Curriculum			1.00	.71 **
Physical Environment				1.00

* 1 - tailed Significance p=.01
** 1 - tailed Significance p=.001

4.3 Predicting Quality of Child Care

To determine whether it was possible to predict the quality of care received in school-aged programs, a series of regression analyses were performed to examine the relationship between measures of quality (staff-child interaction, balance of activities, curriculum, and physical environment) and factors that it is anticipated will affect quality. These factors were: licensed versus unlicensed programs; operator type (non-profit licensed, municipal licensed, commercial licensed, and unlicensed programs); programs on and off school premises; and qualifications of staff.

It should be noted that the licensed versus unlicensed and the operator type variables are similar to each other, except that commercial licensed programs are identified as a separate category of operator type. The three categories that define operator type are non-profit licensed organizations (municipal licensed, non-profit licensed), for-profit licensed programs (commercial), and unlicensed programs. We anticipated finding a similar pattern of results

for the licensed and operator type variables, although the operator type variable may offer more precision because it separates commercial licensed programs from the other types of licensed programs.

The staff qualifications variable also requires some explanation. It measures the qualifications of staff who are working in the program. Based on reports from the school-aged program administrators, the qualifications of staff were assigned to one of the following four categories: a university degree; an Early Childhood Education (ECE) diploma or its equivalent; a community college diploma from another field or other post-secondary diploma; high school education or some post-secondary education. These qualifications were ranked by assigning higher scores to staff with higher qualifications. Staff with a university degree were assigned a score of 3 as were staff with an E.C.E. or its equivalent; staff with another community college diploma were assigned a 2; and those with high school training were given a 1. Although there is probably general agreement about the ordering of qualifications, a number of people would argue either that an E.C.E. diploma should score higher than a university degree or vice versa. In our view this issue has not been empirically resolved, although recent U.S. data (Whitebook, Howes, & Phillips, 1990) suggest that the amount of formal education is actually a better predictor of quality. Because the matter has not yet been resolved, we have opted to assign equal scores to university degrees and E.C.E.s to reflect the general view that both of these qualifications are more suitable than a community college diploma in another area. To obtain an overall single measure of the staff qualifications for a program, average staff qualifications were obtained by adding the scores of all staff and then dividing by the number of staff.

Regression Analyses

Results of the regression analyses are shown in Table 4.3.1. The Table shows an interesting pattern of results.

Interaction

Looking at the first measure of quality, the quality of staff-child interaction, it would appear that the best single predictor for this measure of quality is the type of operator responsible for the program. A higher quality of staff-child interaction was observed for the middle group (6.0-9.9 years) and older children (10-12 years) although not for younger children in licensed non-profit and municipal programs than in licensed commercial and unlicensed programs.

Balance

Looking at the second major dependent variable, balance of activities, it would appear that the most predictive factor for the young group (3.8-5.9 years) and the middle group (6.0-9.9 years) children was premises while the operator type was also predictive for these two groups and most predictive for the oldest group (10-12 years) of children. These results indicate that a more appropriate balance of activities (e.g., indoor/outdoor, staff initiated/child initiated) was found in programs on-school premises compared with those off-school premises. Also programs offered by municipal and non-profit centres tend to have a better balance of activities than programs offered by commercial and unlicensed centres.

Physical Environment

The third major dependent variable, physical environment, is best predicted by the qualifications of staff for the young group (3.8-5.9 years) and middle group (6.0-9.9 years) although not for the oldest group of children (10.0-12 years). That is, programs with more highly qualified staff tended to have more appropriate physical environments for the young and middle group of children than programs staffed by less highly qualified personnel.

Curriculum

Results of regression analysis indicated that none of the variables entered (premises, operator type, or qualifications) were able to predict curriculum.

Table 4.3.1 Predicting Quality of Care for Different Aged Children

Measure of Quality	Predicted by	Age of Child	R	R^2	F	
Interaction	Premises	Young[1]	.08	.01	.17	
		Medium[2]	.18	.03	1.28	
		Old[3]	.17	.03	.46	
	Operator Type	Young	.25	.06	.88	
		Medium	.44	.20	4.19	**
		Old	.64	.41	9.20	**
	Qualifications	Young	.12	.01	.34	
		Medium	.13	.02	.54	
		Old	.05	.00	.03	
Balance	Premises	Young	.39	.15	5.31	*
		Medium	.51	.26	13.27	**
		Old	.34	.11	1.90	
	Operator Type	Young	.34	.11	1.67	
		Medium	.49	.24	5.46	**
		Old	.54	.29	5.29	*
	Qualifications	Young	.13	.02	.42	
		Medium	.20	.04	1.34	
		Old	.26	.07	.63	
Physical Environment	Premises	Young	.04	.00	.04	
		Medium	.03	.00	.03	
		Old	.15	.02	.37	
	Operator Type	Young	.42	.18	2.79	
		Medium	.24	.06	1.02	
		Old	.12	.01	.22	
	Qualifications	Young	.48	.23	7.65	**
		Medium	.41	.17	6.64	**
		Old	.31	.10	1.20	

[1]Young: 3.8-5.9 years of age
[2]Medium: 6.0-9.9 years of age
[3]Old: 10-12 years of age

Summary of Regression Analyses

In designing this project it was assumed that quality of school-aged child care was multifaceted. For this reason five dimensions of quality were identified and measured during observation -- staff-child interaction, balance of activities, physical environment, curriculum,

and health and safety. During an internal analysis of the scales used to measure these aspects of quality it was discovered that the health and safety items were not highly enough intercorrelated and so could not be used as a scale.

Quality of care is the result of a number of different factors. Staff-child interaction appears to be most strongly predicted by operator type, balance of activities by premises, and physical environment by staff qualifications. On the basis of these results, it would appear that the type of school-aged program most likely to offer high quality child care is a licensed non-profit or municipal program, located on school premises staffed by people, with high qualifications, either a university degree or an E.C.E.

5.0 FURTHER RESULTS

5.1 Child Satisfaction With the Program

As previously described in Section 3, almost all children responded positively when they were asked questions about their feelings toward the school-aged program and the adults employed by it. Because of the lack of variety of responses, no significant variation in child satisfaction with program type was obtained.

A second possible measure of child satisfaction could be the turnover rate of children. The assumption would be that if children are unhappy with the program then they leave it. As we mentioned before, turnover rates are high. This measure revealed no significant differences in turnover rate as a function of program type.

5.2 Parent Satisfaction with Program

Almost all parents appear to be satisfied with the program. For example, 97% of all parents report that their child is happy with the program. Caution needs to be exercised when interpreting this result, however, because results generally indicate that parents are relatively uninvolved with their child's school-aged program. Because of the lack of variation in parent satisfaction, no relation was obtained between parent satisfaction and program type.

With respect to the location of the program, more parents indicated that they were satisfied with the location of the program when it was on-school premises than when it was off- school premises. (Chi-square (1) = 6.29, $p<.01$).

As shown in Table 5.2.1, this result was obtained for both licensed and unlicensed programs.

Table 5.2.1 Percentage of Parents Satisfied with Program's Location

	On Premises	Off Premises
Licensed	97.1 (n=104)	84.9 (n=53)
Unlicensed	93.9 (n=33)	88.5 (n=26)

5.3 Parent Participation in Decision Making

As previously discussed many parents do not appear to be involved in the decision making of their child's school-aged program. This result can be seen by reviewing Table 5.3.1, which indicates whether parents believe the program would permit them to be involved in a variety of activities.

Table 5.3.1. Percentage of Parents Who Feel Program Would Permit Them to Engage in Various Activities

Activity	Licensed*			Unlicensed+		
	yes	no	don't know	yes	no	don't know
Observing children's behaviour	79.9	3.9	16.2	67.9	3.6	28.6
Helping with program activities	57.0	6.6	36.4	54.5	1.8	43.6
Helping on field trips	70.0	4.8	38.1	59.3	1.9	39.0
Attending Parent Meeting	78.0	2.0	20	58.2	0	41.8
Helping with program planning	33.1	2.8	40	29.1	0	48.1
Participating in program evaluation	53.7	4.1	42.2	50.9	36.4	47.3
Serving on Board	31.7	2.1	66.2	27.8	0	72.2
Serving on advisory committee	37.9	2.8	59.3	29.1	0	70.9

*The number of respondents for each activity in the licensed programs ranges from 145 -154.

+The number of respondents for each activity in the unlicensed programs range from 54-56.

As this table indicates, many parents did not know whether their program permitted them to participate in decision making by serving on the Board or an advisory committee, by assisting in the evaluation of the program, or by helping with program planning. In addition, a number of parents did not know whether they could participate in activities such as helping with the program, helping on field trips, or observing children's behaviour.

Table 5.3.1 also indicates that for each activity in that Table, a higher percentage of parents in licensed programs had a better idea of activities they can be involved in than parents in unlicensed programs.

Results consistent with this finding were also obtained when parents were asked to evaluate how well informed they feel about a variety of program areas.

Table 5.3.2 How Well Informed Parents Feel About Program Areas

	Licensed Mean	Unlicensed Mean	
Program Philosophy	3.0 ± .91 (n=149)	2.7 ± 1.20 (n=55)	2.9
Payment Information	3.6 ± .66 (n=147)	3.5 ± .84 (n=54)	3.5
Hours of Operation	3.7 ± .52 (n=154)	3.7 ± .70 (n=55)	3.7
Holidays	3.7 ± .55 (n=153)	3.4 ± .92 (n=54)	3.6*
Transportation	3.4 ± .86 (n=116)	3.4 ± .95 (n=44)	3.4
Activities	3.1 ± .85 (n=154)	2.9 ± 1.02 (n=56)	3.0
Behaviour Guiding Techniques	2.7 ± .98 (n=153)	2.3 ± 1.16 (n=56)	2.6
Opportunities for Parent Involvement	2.9 ± .98 (n=148)	2.7 ± 1.13 (n=51)	2.7
Number of Supervisory Staff	3.1 ± .93 (n=153)	2.9 ± 1.11 (n=55)	3.1

1 = Not at all informed; 4 = Very well informed
* $p<.05$

Parents from licensed programs indicated that they were slightly better informed than parents from unlicensed programs, a difference that is statistically significant by a MANOVA test of significance ($F(9,132)=2.07$, $p<.05$). Examining Table 5.3.2 in more detail, parents generally seemed to be better informed about the operational aspects of the program directly affecting

them (e.g., payment information, hours of operation, holidays, transportation) than they were about policy and curriculum issues such as program philosophy, activities offered by the program, behaviour guiding techniques, and opportunities for parent involvement.

5.4 Variations by Auspice

There are two results in the current study indicating that operator type is an important attribute of school-aged programs. First, as reported in Section 4, it was found that quality of staff-child interaction could be predicted by operator type. More appropriate staff-child interactions and more appropriate balance of activities were found in municipal and non-profit licensed centres than in commercial licensed programs and unlicensed school-aged programs.

A second finding, which will be reported in more detail in Section 5.6, was that the staff were more highly qualified in non-profit and municipal licensed programs than in commercial licensed programs, who in turn appeared to be more highly qualified than staff in unlicensed programs. These results are broadly consistent findings of Whitebook, Howes, & Phillips (1990) who reported that in American child care centres quality of care and the qualifications of staff were higher in non-profit child care centres than in commercial centres.

Care needs to be exercised in thinking about the variations by auspice in the current study because there were only four licensed commercial programs in the sample. It would be desirable to replicate the findings reported here with a larger sample. In addition, it is probably the case that there are important differences between school-aged programs by auspice in addition to those reported here that could not be verified because of the small number of commercial licensed programs in the sample.

5.5 Location of Program and School/Child Care Co-ordination

Results suggest that communication between a school-aged program and school occurs more frequently and covers a broader range of topics when the program is on school premises. Table 5.5.1 shows the mean frequency of communication between the school-aged program and school according to principals, teachers, staff, and administrators.

Table 5.5.1 Mean Frequency of Communication Between Program and School

	SCHOOL				SCHOOL-AGE PROGRAM			
	Principal		Teacher		Administrator		Staff	
	On Prem	Off Prem	On Prem	Off Prem	On Prem	Off Prem	On Prem	Off Prem
Licensed	4.2 (n=17)	2.5 (n=11)	3.1 (n=17)	1.1 (n=11)	4.6 (n=15)	2.4 (n=8)	4.2 (n=17)	2.2 (n=11)
Unlicensed	4.3 (n=4)	2.3 (n=7)	2.8 (n=4)	2.3 (n=6)	3.0 (n=4)	2.6 (n=7)	4.2 (n=5)	1.6 (n=7)

Note. 1 = Never;
2 = Less than once per month;
3 = Once per month;
4 = Weekly;
5 = Daily

Results show that, regardless of the source being questioned, more frequent communication between programs and schools was reported when programs are on-school premises. When school-aged programs were located in schools there was communication on a weekly basis or more often; when programs were not located on school premises communication occurred less than once a month. The data were analyzed using a Kruskal-Wallis one-way ANOVA. Results indicate that principals with programs on school premises reported significantly more frequent communication than principals having programs off school premises [($X^2(3)=15.67, p<.005$]; similar results were obtained from staff [$X^2(3)=16.54, p<.005$], teachers [$X^2(3, N=38)=13.02, p<.01$], and child care administrators [$X^2(3)=10.99, p<.05$].

In addition, Table 5.5.2 shows that both staff and teachers indicate that more topics were discussed when the program was located in the school than when the program was located off school premises. These general findings were confirmed statistically. A MANOVA using Hotelling's T^2 revealed an overall effect of school premises [$F(2,35)=20.30, p<.0001$]. Further examination revealed that this effect holds for staff [$F(1,36)=22.24, p<.0001$] and teachers [$F(1,36)=15.86, p<.0001$] considered separately; that is, schools tended to discuss

more topics on average, with on-school premises programs than off-school premises programs, according to both staff and teachers. There was no significant difference between licensed and unlicensed programs according to Hotellings T^2 [F(2,35)=1.99,n.s], nor any significant interaction [F(2,35) = .10, n.s.].

Table 5.5.2 Mean Number of Topics Discussed Between Schools and Program According to Staff and Teachers

	Staff		Teacher	
	On Premises	Off Premises	On Premises	Off Premises
Licensed	3.9 ± 1.60 (n=17)	1.1 ± 1.38 (n=11)	2.1 ± 1.76 (n=17)	.1 ± .30 (n=11)
Unlicensed	3.0 ± 2.45 (n=5)	.6 ± 1.13 (n=7)	2.8 ± 1.64 (n=5)	1 ± 1 (n=7)

Satisfaction with communication is examined in Table 5.5.3. Despite the appearance that child care administrators from licensed off-school premises programs were somewhat more dissatisfied, there was no statistically significant main effect of License [F(2,13)= .67, n.s., of Premises [F(2,13)=.44, n.s.], nor of License by Premises [F(2,13)=.44, n.s.].

Table 5.5.3 Mean Rating of Child care Administrators' and Teachers' Satisfaction with Communication Between Program and School

	Child care Administrator		Teacher	
	On Premises	Off Premises	On Premises	Off Premises
Licensed	1.4 (n=16)	2.6 (n=7)	1.7 (n=12)	2 (n=1)
Unlicensed	1.3 (n=3)	1.7 (n=6)	1.6 (n=5)	2.0 (n=3)

Note. 1 = Very satisfied;
2 = Somewhat satisfied;
3 = Somewhat dissatisfied;
4 = Very dissatisfied

Table 5.5.4 Mean Rating of Child care Administrators' Satisfaction with Co-ordination of Program with School

	On Premises	Off Premises
Licensed	1.7±.70 (n=16)	2.6±.89 (n=5)
Unlicensed	1.7±1.15 (n=3)	1.5±.58 (n=4)

Note. 1 = Very satisfied;
2 = Somewhat satisfied;
3 = Somewhat dissatisfied;
4 = Very dissatisfied

Table 5.5.4 shows administrators' mean ratings of satisfaction with co-ordination between the program and school, on a four point scale, where 1 = very satisfied and 4 = very dissatisfied. If one examines the table it would appear that administrators in licensed off-school premises programs were less satisfied than all other administrators. However, the results of an ANOVA indicate that there were no statistically significant effects of License [(F(1,24)=2.49,n.s], off-school premises [F(1,24)=1.10,n.s] or of the interaction of License by Premises [F(1,24)=2.31,n.s].

Patterns of Attendance

Table 5.5.5 indicates times during the day that parents reported their child attending child care. As indicated in the Table, most children went to the program after school and often attended the program before school and during lunch. The exception to this pattern appears to be unlicensed, off school premises programs which were used after school, but were not often used at other times during the day. This pattern can be most easily observed by examining the row called percentage other which represents the percentage of time children use the program before school, during lunch, or at other times. This column indicates that with the exception of unlicensed off school premise programs, school-aged programs tend to be used at different times during the day. Results of a MANOVA confirm the pattern of results observable, namely that there is a significant interaction between licensed and off school premises [F(1,213)=21.09,p<.001] and between premises and unlicensed programs [F(1,213)=5.41,p=.02].

Table 5.5.5 Percentage of Parents' Reporting When Children Attend Program

Times Children Attend	Licensed		Unlicensed	
	On Premises	Off Premises	On Premises	Off Premises
	n=105	n=53	n=33	n=26
Before School	44	55	39	0
Lunch	24	41	30	8
Other Times	20	24	15	19
Percentage Other	56	79	64	23
After School	84	66	100	100

5.6 Type of Staff Training by Auspice and Location of Child Care Program

A result of some interest and importance is the finding that there were significant differences among types of school-aged programs in the qualifications of their staff.

Comparing first of all the qualifications of staff as a function of auspice or operator type, as shown in Table 5.6.1, there were substantial differences in staff qualifications between different types of operators. Municipal and non-profit agencies had the most highly qualified staff, followed by the commercial agencies, and then by the unlicensed agencies. Results indicate that 82% of the staff at municipal licensed programs had university degrees or E.C.E.'s, while only 4% had high school or some post-secondary education; 67% of the staff at non-profit licensed agencies had university degrees or E.C.E.'s and 19% had high school or some post-secondary education; 35% of the staff at commercial licensed agencies had university degrees or ECEs but were outnumbered by the staff (57%) with high school or some post-secondary education; 20% of the staff in the unlicensed agencies had university, E.C.E.'s and there were 43% with high school or some post secondary education.

Before statistically analyzing these results it was necessary to reduce the number of categories of education. One category consisted of staff with university degrees or E.C.E. diplomas and the other category contained staff with other community college training or high school. In addition the non-profit and municipal operator types were combined. The resulting chi-square indicated that the three groups (that is, the non-profit/municipal, commercial, and unlicensed child care programs) are significantly different from each other (Chi-square (2)=23.55, $p<.001$).

A second set of results also in Table 5.6.1, show that licensed programs tended to have more highly qualified staff (66.7% have university degrees or E.C.E.'s) than unlicensed programs (20% have a university degree or E.C.E.'s). This result is not surprising since licensed programs are the municipal, non-profit, and commercial operators just discussed, and unlicensed programs are the same programs designated as unlicensed in the previous paragraph. Results of a chi-square test indicate that licensed and unlicensed programs are significantly different (Chi-square (3)=22.01, p<.001).

When the programs on and off school premises are examined, results indicate that staff with programs on school premises tended to be more highly qualified (65.7% had university education or an E.C.E.) than staff of programs working at off school premises (43.7% have a university or E.C.E.). Results of a chi-square test indicate that the qualifications of staff on and off school premises were significantly different (Chi-square (3)=9.05, p<.05).

Table 5.6.1 Percentage of Staff Members Who Completed a Level of Education as Reported by Child care Administrators

	University	E.C.E. or Equivalent	Community College/ Other	High School or Some post Secondary	Total
OPERATOR:					
Non-profit	28.0	39.0	15.0	19.0	n=54
Municipal	7.0	75.0	14.0	4.0	n=28
Commercial	21.0	14.0	7.0	57.0	n=14
Other (Unlicensed)	16.0	4.0	29.0	43.0	n=25
Licensed	19.8	46.9	12.5	20.8	n=96
Unlicensed	20.0	0.0	36.0	44.0	n=25
On School Premises	21.9	43.8	9.6	24.7	n=73
Off School Premises	16.7	27.0	29.0	27.0	n=48

5.7 Licensed and Unlicensed Programs

In this section differences between licensed and unlicensed programs are described. Caution needs to be exercised in interpreting the results in this section, because data reported in the previous section on staff qualifications suggests that there may be substantial variations between municipal, non-profit and commercial licensed agencies in a variety of aspects of child care. Unfortunately, these differences often cannot be detected in the current study because our total sample of 40 programs contains only four commercial programs.

Age Distribution.

Younger children tended to attend licensed programs while older children were more likely to be in unlicensed programs. As shown in Table 5.7.1 there were on average about 13 children 3.8 - 5.9 years of age in licensed programs while unlicensed programs averaged only three children in that age range. This difference is statistically significant ($F(1,34)=5.50, p<.05$). On the other hand, unlicensed programs have on average 17 children who are 10-12 years of age, while licensed programs have only two children in that age range, a difference that is also statistically significant ($F(1,34)=9.53, p<.005$). The number of 6-10 year old children in licensed programs, which averages 18 children, and unlicensed programs, which averages 25 children, is not significantly different ($F(1,34)=2.94$, n.s.).

Results from the current study do not indicate why younger children are in licensed programs while older children tend to be in unlicensed programs. One possibility is that as children become older, parents feel more comfortable with unlicensed programs, which appear to permit children more autonomy and are usually considerably less costly. It is also possible that some of the unlicensed programs have access to such facilities as swimming pools, pottery rooms, and gyms which are typically unavailable in licensed programs. These facilities would be particularly appealing to older children. However, when children are younger, parents prefer the more closely supervised, regulated environment of licensed programs.

Table 5.7.1 Mean Number of Children of Different Ages enrolled in Licensed and Unlicensed Programs.

	Age			
	3.8 - 5.9	6 - 9.9	10 - 12.0	Mean Total
Licensed	13 ± 12.26 ($\bar{n}$=26)	18 ± 8.27 ($\bar{n}$=26)	2 ± 3.26 ($\bar{n}$=26)	29.6
Unlicensed	3 ± 6.12 ($\bar{n}$=10)	25 ± 18.14 ($\bar{n}$=10)	17 ± 25.46 ($\bar{n}$=10)	40.6
Weighted Mean	9.9	20.0	6.1	

Range of Activity Choices Available to Children

Licensed programs offer a greater variety of activity choices for children than unlicensed programs.

Table 5.7.2 Frequency of Activities that Program Offers as Reported by Staff

	Licensed n=28	Unlicensed n=12
Sport	4.3	5.0
Art	4.8	5.0
Dance	3.4	1.8 **
Drama	3.8	2.4 ***
Science	3.6	2.6 **
Quiet	5.0	4.6 *
Outside	4.9	4.6 **
Sensory	4.8	4.4
Average	4.3	3.8 ***

Note. 1 = Never; 2 = Less than once a month; 3 = Once a month; 4 = Weekly; 5 = Daily

*=p<.05
**=p<.01
***=p<.005

Table 5.7.2 summarizes staff reports of the frequency with which various activities are offered. Examining first the average frequency of activities for licensed and unlicensed programs, it can be seen that licensed programs offered a significantly broader range of activities more frequently (average = 4.3 versus 3.8) than unlicensed programs, as assessed by a Mann-Whitney U test (U=69; n1=12; n2=28; p=.003). The particular activities of dance, drama, science, quiet activities and outside activities (designated by an asterisk) were all offered more frequently by licensed than by unlicensed programs as assessed by Mann-Whitney U tests.

Number of Activity Choices Available to Children

Table 5.7.3 shows the mean number of daily activities from which children can choose. Results of a MANOVA indicate that, the consistent with the findings reported in Table 5.7.2, there were more choices in licensed settings [$F(1,36)=7.14$, $p<.05$] than unlicensed settings. There is, however, no significant effect of premises [$F(1,36)=.39$, n.s.] and no interaction effect [$F(1,36)=.50$, n.s.].

Table 5.7.3 Mean Number of Child's Daily Activity Choices

	On Premises	Off Premises
Licensed	3.7 (n=17)	3.7 (n=11)
Unlicensed	3.2 (n=5)	2.9 (n=7)

Staff-child Ratio

There were substantial differences between licensed and unlicensed programs in terms of their ability to specify their staff-child ratio policy. As shown in Table 5.7.4, almost all licensed programs were able to describe their staff-child ratio policy. Consistent with the Day Nurseries Act, 96.4% of the licensed programs had a staff-child ratio of 1:15 or lower (for younger children). In contrast, 50% of the unlicensed programs had staff-child ratio policies that were consistent with the Day Nurseries Act, despite not being regulated by that Act. The remaining 50% of the unlicensed programs did not specify a staff-child ratio policy.

Table 5.7.4 Percentage of Licensed and Unlicensed Programs Specifying a Staff-Child Ratio

	Licensed	Unlicensed
Staff-Child Ratio (1:15 or lower)	96.4 (n=27)	50.0 (n=6)
Unspecified	3.6 (n=1)	50.0 (n=6)
	100	100

Family Income

Table 5.7.5 presents the results of a question which asked child care administrators to estimate the average yearly income of families in their program. Inspection of Table 5.7.5 indicates that the estimated average annual income of families in licensed programs was substantially higher than the estimated annual income of families in unlicensed programs ($t(25)=4.71$, $p<.001$). Ninety percent of the child care administrators of licensed programs reported that the average family income of families in their program was over $30,000 per year. In contrast, in unlicensed programs, none of the child care administrators reported that

their families earned more than $30,000 per year. While this result may at first appear puzzling, it should be remembered that unlicensed programs often charge families nominal fees, in contrast to licensed programs which can cost families several hundred dollars per month. For this reason one might well expect low-income families to opt for the less expensive unlicensed form of care. In addition, low-income families may be discouraged from using licensed child care due to the difficulties involved in qualifying for such assistance. It should be noted that, probably because of the sensitive nature of the question, responses were obtained from only 27 child care administrators.

Table 5.7.5 Distribution of Family Yearly Income

	<$10,000	$10,000-19,999	$20,000-29,999	$30,000-39,999	$40,000+
Licensed	0	0	2	9	9
Unlicensed	1	2	4	0	0

Food at Program

Children are more likely to eat lunch in licensed programs than in unlicensed programs. Table 5.7.6 indicates that about a third of the children ate lunch at licensed school-aged programs while less than 5% of the children ate lunch in unlicensed programs, a difference which is significant as assessed by a chi-square test of significance (chi-square (1) = 9.06, p=.003).

Table 5.7.6 Percentage of Children in Licensed and Unlicensed Programs Who Eat Lunch at Program

	Licensed (N=81)	Unlicensed (N=32)
Eat Lunch	32.1	3.1
Don't Eat Lunch	67.9	96.9

Table 5.7.7 details the percentage of children whose child care program provides them with food when they are hungry. Virtually all children in licensed programs, both on- and off-school premises, reported being fed when they were hungry. Although the majority of children in unlicensed programs also reported being fed when they were hungry, they were less likely to get food at an unlicensed program if they were hungry. Results of a chi-square test were highly significant (Chi-square (3) = 15.4, p=.002).

Table 5.7.7 Percentage of Children Who Report Getting Food at Program

	On Premises	Off Premises
Licensed	100 n=48	93.9 n=33
Unlicensed	76.9 n=13	73.7 n=19

Record Keeping

Table 5.7.8 shows the percentage of licensed and unlicensed programs that keep different records on children. Results indicate that generally licensed programs were more likely to keep records than unlicensed programs.

Table 5.7.8 Percentage of Programs Keeping Records on Children

	Licensed (N=26)	Unlicensed (N=10)
Health	96.2	40
Accident	92.3	90
Child Abuse	69.2	60
Emergency Contact	100.0	80
Emergency Release Forms	88.5	50

Note: More than one response may be chosen.

This result was statistically confirmed by counting the total number of types of records (i.e., Health, Accident, Child Abuse, Emergency Contact, Emergency Release) kept for each program. A Mann-Whitney U test performed on this count indicated that licensed programs keep significantly more types of records than unlicensed programs (U=93; n1=12; n2=28; p=.02).

6.0 REVIEW OF FINDINGS

In this section the strengths and weaknesses of the models of school-aged programs are described. In describing strengths of the different models attention will be given to the determinants of quality of child care identified in the current study. In addition, careful consideration will be given to what has been learned about the views of parents and children.

6.1 Views of Children

Children generally indicated that they were happy with their child care programs. Perhaps the most important findings arising from the current study is to confirm the importance of developing age appropriate school-aged programs. The results of the current study indicate that children aged 4-6, 7-9, and 10-12 have different activity preferences which need to be taken into consideration in designing and carrying out a school-aged program. Younger children appear to prefer more process-oriented activities whereas older children prefer more product-oriented activities, that is, activities requiring the development and expression of skill.

6.2 Views of Parents

Almost all of the parents in the current study appear to be satisfied with the current child care arrangements. A striking finding is that many parents were generally uninvolved and uninformed about their child's school-aged program. A second result of significance is that parents indicated a preference for school-aged programs located on school premises.

Finally, results indicated that low-income families were much more likely to send their children to unlicensed programs than licensed programs. That coupled with the finding that older children were more likely to be found in unlicensed programs suggests that low-income families, who are extremely "price sensitive" in making child care selections (e.g., Robins & Spiegelman, 1978) may decide to send their older children to an unlicensed program because it is so much less expensive. Thus, from the perspective of parents an important strength of unlicensed child care is that it is inexpensive.

6.3 Components of Child Care Programs

In Section 4, a number of dimensions of child care were identified. These were: staff-child interaction; balance of activities; physical environment; and curriculum. In addition, a number of components of child care models were identified that appear to affect the quality of care children receive. In this Section, the components of school-aged programs are discussed in the context of all of the results obtained from the current study.

6.3.1 Location of the Program

Results from the current study are generally consistent with the view that there are a number of advantages of locating school-aged programs on school premises. There are a number of reasons for this conclusion. First, results from the analysis of the quality found that there was a more appropriate balance of activities when the program was located on school premises. In addition, it was found that there was more frequent communication about a broader variety of topics between the school and program when it was located on school premises suggesting that the ability to more effectively co-ordinate the activities of school and program is enhanced when the program is located on school premises.

Results also indicate that programs located on school premises provide child care at a broader range of times during the day than programs that are off school premises enabling them to meet an array of varied needs characteristic of school-aged child care. Finally, as previously reported, parents were more satisfied with the location of the school-aged program when it was on school premises.

6.3.2 Licensed Programs

Results from the study indicate that licensed programs have a number of strengths. First, it was found that licensed programs kept more records about children in their care. Second, almost all licensed programs had a policy regarding staff-child ratios, which was consistent with the ratios required under the Day Nurseries Act. In contrast, 50% of the unlicensed programs had a policy. This finding is important because a number of studies (e.g., Ruopp, Travers, Glantz & Coelen, 1979) have reported finding higher quality of child care when the ratio of caregivers to children is high. A third important advantage is that licensed programs offer significantly more activity choices to children than unlicensed programs. Finally, parents appear to be more informed and involved in licensed programs.

6.3.3 Auspice

The current study provides two results suggesting that non-profit school-aged programs offer advantages over commercial programs. First, in terms of two measures of quality, staff-child interaction and balance of activities, non-profit licensed programs provided a higher quality of care than commercial licensed programs and unlicensed programs. Second, the staff are more highly qualified in non-profit licensed programs than they are in commercial licensed programs or unlicensed programs.

6.3.4 Staff Qualifications

Results generally indicate that more highly qualified staff work in centres with more appropriate physical environments, a subscale of quality of child care.

6.3.5 Summary

In summary, the results of the current study indicate that the highest quality type of school-aged program is most likely found in a licensed, non-profit program located in a school staffed by well qualified people. The program must be designed so that it offers age-appropriate care for the children enrolled in the program.

The primary weakness of this type of program is that it costs parents much more money to send their child to it. For this reason, it would appear that a number of parents, particularly low-income parents with older children opt for unlicensed forms of care.

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Appendix A

Quality of Child Care Observation Instrument

A. Staff - child Interactions

1. Staff respond appropriately to questions and requests from children (e.g., with respect and attention).

2. Staff speak with individual children in a friendly manner (e.g., with affection and support).

3. Staff encourage independence in children as they are developmentally ready.

4. Staff use positive approaches to help children behave constructively.

5. The environment is primarily marked by pleasant conversation, spontaneous laughter and exclamations of excitement rather than harsh, stressful noise or enforced quiet.

*6. Children have opportunities to participate in group activities.

7. Children have opportunities to work or to play alone.

*8. Adults help younger children to join with and participate in group experiences.

9. Staff initiate, supervise and guide activities where appropriate.

10. Staff encourage children's pro-social behaviours such as co-operation, helping, taking turns, talking to solve problems.

11. A child can leave an activity when s/he chooses.

12. Staff take time to greet and say goodbye to individual children.

13. Children are generally comfortable, relaxed, involved and happy in the environment.

14. Staff encourage and support children in deciding what they want to do.

B. Balance

1. Please examine the schedule and physical environment to determine to what extent the following balance of opportunities are available to the group:

   a. Indoor/Outdoor
   b. Quiet (e.g., board and care games)/Active (e.g., team sports)
   *c. Individual/Group activities

d. Large muscle (e.g., large equipment, sports)/Small muscle (e.g., sewing, macrame, pottery, etc.)
e. Structured/unstructured activities
f. Staff initiated/child initiated

C. Curriculum

1. In the environment there are examples of ongoing work or productions (e.g., murals, plays, papier mache, weaving, constructions).

2. Children have available to them the tools necessary to create finished products (e.g., hammers, saws, child and adult scissors, looms, needles, thread, computers, audio visual equipment).

*3. Children are seen selecting or participating in the selection of music being played or available to them (i.e., cassettes, tapes or records).

4. Staff organize and supervise games to utilize large spaces (i.e., baseball, tag, hockey and co-operative games outdoors and in the gym).

5. There are materials such as trucks and blocks, dolls and paraphernalia, super heroes, collectibles and commercial toys which children can combine to create fantasy play.

6. The art on the walls reflects the expression of individual children as opposed to adult-directed, pre-cut end products.

7. Adults provide specific instruction for children developing skills in carpentry, weaving, gymnastics, sports, etc.
   a. as a scheduled part of the program
   b. at the request of the children

8. Open-ended materials that can be manipulated are available, accessible and in sufficient quantity to foster self expression in children (e.g., sand, water, blocks, lego, etc.).

*9. Board games and cards are available, accessible and in sufficient quantity for children.

10. Group games are supervised in a manner that supports the participation and enjoyment of all the children wishing to participate.

11. There are observable materials which support a positive identity for the following groups:
    a. racial groups
    b. age groups
    c. male and female
    d. special needs

12. Children are encouraged to take part in activities outside of stereotyped gender-based choices (e.g., girls and boys are given equal opportunities for being involved in group games and creative activities).

13. Staff support smooth and unregimented transitions between activities (i.e., children are informed about a transition ahead of time).

14. There is evidence of planning and setting up of materials before an activity begins.

15. Children help to plan and participate in the change of activity.

16. Staff adjust to children's interests, or other unexpected situations in a relaxed way.

17. There is evidence of children being provided with materials and experiences which allow them to explore the physical world (e.g., nature hikes, science projects).

18. Activities are generally challenging, stimulating and innovative.

D. Physical Environment

1. There is enough usable space so that children are not crowded.

2. Activity areas are defined by spatial arrangement.

3. Furniture is available that is appropriate to the age and size of the children.

4. Children are able to pursue their interests using a variety of body positions and work levels.

5. Adequate space is provided for children to hang their clothing and store their personal belongings.

6. Private areas where children can play or work alone or with a friend are available.

7. The environment includes soft elements (e.g., rugs, cushions, rocking chairs, couches).

*8. The outdoor area includes a variety of natural elements and equipment that provide for diverse play opportunities for children.

9. The program has an adequate amount of exclusive space.

*10. Children have access to a gym, kitchen, playground, etc.

E. Health and Safety

1. Toilets, drinking water and hand-washing facilities are easily accessible to children.

*2. Space is safe, well lit and comfortable (i.e., adequate lighting, ventilation, temperature control, stairways with handrails, floor coverings do not slip, screens on open windows).

3. Cushioning materials are used under climbing equipment, slides and swings (e.g., foam, sand, wood chips).

*4. Climbing equipment, swings and large pieces of furniture are securely anchored.

5. Emergency telephone numbers including police, fire, rescue, and poison control are posted by telephones.

6. Written emergency procedures are posted in conspicuous places.

7. Children are encouraged to dress appropriately for active indoor and outdoor play.

*8. Toxic materials are stored safely.

*9. For younger children, art and other sensory materials are non toxic.

*10. For older children appropriate precautions are taken in the use and storage of materials.

*11. A well-equipped first aid kit is easily accessible.